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AUTHOR Covitz, Sharon Baum
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ABSTRACT

The effects of career counseling on subsequent job satisfaction in mature women returning to college was investigated. Subjects, women 25 years or older upon graduation, were drawn from two populations--one that had been involved in career counseling through an established counseling program for mature women, and one that had not. While career counseling did not have a measureable effect on job satisfaction, other variables such as income, marital status, number of children, level of education, and profession did. It is possible that, over time, the positive effects of career counseling were obscured by other factors which fulfilled needs of the subjects. (The questionnaire administered for the study is included.) (Author/HLM)

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THE EFFECTS OF CAREER COUNSELING ON SUBSEQUENT JOB SATISFACTION IN MATURE WOMEN RETURNING TO COLLEGE

Sharon Baum Covitz, Ph.D.

Presented at the National Association of Women, Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, April 11, 1980, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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THE EFFECTS OF CAREER COUNSELING ON SUBSEQUENT JOB SATISFACTION IN MATURE WOMEN RETURNING TO COLLEGE

Women who are returning to college and eventually entering or reentering the job market are predominantly between the ages of 25 and 65, are married and have worked for one or two years before settling down to raise a family. They are from a lower middle to upper income bracket with at least one year of post secondary education (Richards, 1976; Lindbloom, 1974; Steele, 1974).

The majority of these women have returned to college to develop the skills they require to get a job. Some are not economically compelled to seek employment, but what they are seeking is an alternate life style; one providing integration, structure, meaning and opportunity for growth relationships and creativity (Eason, 1972).

When a woman decides to return to college after a period of many years, considerable re-adjustment is required. She must focus on her own expectations combining education, vocation, and family life. She must consider the social acceptability of a dual role and a particular career choice (Osipow, 1975). The woman with small children must make satisfactory arrangements for their care while she is not at home. Both children and husband may resent the loss of attention and necessity to become more self reliant. The financial burden of returning to school may produce additional stress. The woman may be bewildered concerning occupational choice or may have made the wrong choice and need re-education and redirection. She may feel unable to study correctly and handle college level work. Grabowski (1972) studied the inhibiting factors in the readjustment period of adults returning to college and found that they

exhibited the following factors on reentry: 1) a lack of self confidence in their ability to learn; 2) unrealistic expectations in their progress; 3) conflicting values and attitudes; 4) lack of study skills; and 5) a lack of continuity with faculty and counselors.

A variety of counseling techniques have become available to deal with the problems experienced by these mature women students (Barbier, 1971; Breen, 1970; Griswald, 1971; Matthews, 1969). Some institutions of higher education have designed programs to aid the mature woman in the transition from home to school and from school to work (Osborn, 1965; Hunter 1965; Brunside, 1974; Manis & Mochizuki, 1972). Some of these programs have incorporated counseling techniques into their programs. Three types of counseling for the returning woman have emerged as components of these programs: personal, vocational and professional. These three types of counseling were defined for this study as follows: personal counseling - advice with personal problems relating to self, family or friends; vocational counseling - information on new occupations, established occupations opening to women, supply and demand, skills assessments, and assistance in improving a present job situation; and professional counseling - assistance in redirecting a person in future goals.

The problems mature women encounter on returning to college to prepare for a new career have been defined; counseling techniques are available to deal with these problems; and programs have been established incorporating counseling. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of career counseling from these programs on subsequent job satisfaction in mature women returning to college.

METHOD

The study was accomplished by administering a questionnaire which measured the effects of career counseling on subsequent job satisfaction, to mature women students. Since a suitable questionnaire was not available at the onset of the study, one was designed. (Table I) The validity of this new instrument was established through statistical analysis of the responses. (Table II) (Principal Components Analysis, Chronbach's Alpha, Spearment Brown Prophecy) The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section I consisted of 19 questions pertaining to demographic information, previous work experience and amount of counseling experienced, if any. Sections II, III, and IV consisted of 21 questions focusing on elements likely to effect job satisfaction that might be influenced by personal, vocational and professional counseling respectively. Total question number was 40.

The students who comprised the sample for this study were drawn from two populations, one that experienced career counseling at an established counseling program for mature women (Duke University), and one that did not (University of Georgia and Augusta College). The questionnaire was sent to women 25 years and older, upon graduation. The graduation dates were between 1970 and 1977. Two questionnaires, same construction but different wording were sent; one for those actually employed (A) and one for those seeking employment (B).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was divided into four subgroups or factors by Principal Components Analysis; factor 1 represented career and personal counseling, factor 2 presented professional counseling, factor 3 represented characteristics

of the job and factor 4 represented home responsibility. (Table IV)

The degree of job satisfaction was compared for each college by multivariate analysis. When the relationship was established among the populations then a univariate analysis was performed to show the relationship of one college to another. The null hypothesis was that job satisfaction as measured by factors 1-4 would not be greater at the counseled college (Duke University) than at the non counseled colleges (Augusta College and University of Georgia). This hypothesis was confirmed. There were no significant differences for factors 1 and 4 by college. Augusta College was significantly more satisfied for factor 2 than the University of Georgia, and Duke and the University of Georgia were more satisfied than Augusta College by factor 3. There appeared to be no effect of counseling. (Table VI) Several other analysis were performed 1) to see if the effect of one variable or differences in the populations altered the effect of career counseling and 2) to see if the combined effect of more than one variable was masking the effect of career counseling on job satisfaction. There was still no significant differences among the colleges for job satisfaction when the effects of other variables were removed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study showed that career counseling does not have a measureable effect on job satisfaction despite a valid questionnaire and comparable populations. Many of the other variables, income, marital status, number of children, level of education and profession have been shown to have an effect on job satisfaction suggesting that these factors perhaps are more important over a longer period of time. (Table VII)

In questioning why career counseling did not have an effect on subsequent job satisfaction several possible explanations came to light. The first possible reason is that while career counseling administered during the program might have an effect on these women, over a period of time, however, the immediate effect of the career counseling will be obscured by other variables. The effect may still be there, but at this stage it is no longer measurable.

Another possibility that may have influenced the results of this study is that while the counseled population was experiencing a formalized counseling program designed to meet their needs the non counseled population may have fulfilled their needs from non-academic sources, i.e. husband, family, friends, clergy and other sources, thus neutralizing the effect of counseling on the control population.

A third possibility in determining why career counseling did not have an effect on job satisfaction is that by counseling these women in better self concepts, in goal direction, and the decision making and job areas, their expectation from a job will have increased. They demand more from a situation than a noncounseled person and therefore are less satisfied.

There are three implications for these counseling programs. Comprehensive evaluations of existing programs need to be undertaken. In these evaluations short range goals need to be defined and then communicated to the participant. A measure of students expectation on entry into the program and at completion is needed because of the potential effect on interpretation of job satisfaction.

Economically, these programs stand to benefit from research that shows positive accomplishments in short range goals. The argument for financial

commitment is more easily won when facts and figures are presented verifying results of the program than by general assumptions.

The final implication is that once a program can be evaluated statistically as accomplishing its short range objectives, the structural attributes of that program can be applied to other programs throughout the country. This would assure that each participant would benefit from a standardized program.

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TABLE I

Questionnaire A (for working women)

SECTION I -- Please check one of the following (1-19):

1. Age? ____25-35, ____36-40, ____41-45, ____46-50, ____51-55, ____56-60, ____Over 60.

2. Marital Status? ____Single, ____Married, ____Widow, ____Divorced.

3. Number of children you have? ____0, ____1, ____2, ____3, ____4, ____more.

4. Number of children whose ages are ____0-3, ____4-6, ____7-9, ____10-14, ____Over 14 years of age.

5. Is your family average income between ____7,000-10,000, ____11,000-16,000, ____17,000-21,000, ____22,000-26,000, ____Over 26,000.

6. What is your highest level of education completed.
____elementary school, ____high school, ____junior college, ____college, ____graduate school, ____professional school - (specify type) _____
_____.

Career counseling is defined for this study as help in re-entering the job market, planning for future careers, help in improving a present job position through more education, personal understanding or a change of fields.

7. a. When you returned to school, did you have career counseling? ____yes ____no

   b. If the answer was yes to 7a, did your career counseling include vocational testing? ____yes ____no

   c. If the answer was yes to 7a, did your career counseling include job information? ____yes ____no

Personal counseling is defined for this study as help with personal problems related to self, family or friends.

8. When you returned to school, did you have personal counseling? ____yes ____no

Professional counseling is defined for this study as aid in redirecting a person in future plans.

9. When you returned to school, did you have professional counseling? ____yes ____no

10. If yes to number 7, how many hours of career counseling did you have?
____0-2, ____2-4, ____4-6, ____6-8, ____Other?

11. Are you working now? ____yes ____no

12. What is your position? ____domestic, ____clerical, ____factory worker, ____professional (teacher, doctor, social worker etc.), ____executive (high level management, government, individually employed), ____public service (police, fire, postal), ____Other.

13. What is the number of years you have been at this position? ____less than one year, ____1-3years, ____4-6 years, ____6-8, years, ____8-10 years, ____over 10.

14. Is your position ____salaried, ____volunteer?

15. Is this your first work experience outside the home? ____yes ____no

16. If no, what position did you hold previously?
____domestic, ____clerical, ____factory worker, ____professional, ____government service, ____executive, ____other, specify_____

_____.

17. How many year(s) in previous position? ____less than one year, ____1-3, ____4-6, ____7-10, ____over 10.

18. If married, did you continue to work after marriage? ____yes ____no

19. How many years? ____less than 1, ____1-3, ____4-6, ____7-10, ____over 10.

SECTION II - Please rate and circle the following responses in relation to your job (20-27):

1 Never
2 Seldom
3 Sometimes
4 Frequently
5 Always

20.	Self confidence allows you to perform well	1 2 3 4 5
21.	Your work fills a void	1 2 3 4 5
22.	Your work makes you feel important	1 2 3 4 5
23.	Your work provides opportunities to satisfy emotional needs	1 2 3 4 5
24.	Your family is happy with your job	1 2 3 4 5
25.	Your job allows you to develop as a person	1 2 3 4 5
26.	You have opportunities for advancement	1 2 3 4 5
27.	Your job replaces decreased home responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5

SECTION III (28-36):

28.	Your job enables you to express your individuality	1 2 3 4 5
29.	There is a demand for your particular abilities in your job	1 2 3 4 5
30.	Your job provides you with a sense of achievement	1 2 3 4 5
31.	You are content with your role in the world of work	1 2 3 4 5

Questionnaire A

32.	Your job enables you to make independent decisions	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Your time schedule at work is flexible	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Your work enables you to express your individual creativity	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Your salary is commensurate to your abilities	1	2	3	4	5
36.	You find your job varied and fulfilling	1	2	3	4	5
SECTION IV (37-40):						
37.	You are better able to handle everyday problems	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Your field of work is interesting	1	2	3	4	5
39.	You are suited for your position	1	2	3	4	5
40.	A part-time position would be more desirable	1	2	3	4	5

TABLE II - Mean Response to Questions 20-40 by College and for Working and Non-working Women at University of Georgia

Question Number	Augusta College *		Duke University		UGA-Working		Non-Work.	
	mean	S.D.	mean	S.D.	mean	S.D.	mean	S.D.
20	4.46	.62	4.34	.61	4.44	.61	4.04	1.09
21	3.87	.93	3.88	.87	3.66	1.00	2.87	1.27
22	3.90	.93	3.81	.95	3.87	1.85	3.47	1.35
23	3.65	1.02	3.40	.96	3.56	.94	3.37	1.46
24	4.10	.86	4.01	1.13	4.20	.84	4.22	1.24
25	4.04	.98	4.14	.83	4.10	.90	4.00	2.17
26	3.00	1.22	3.21	1.35	3.34	1.18	3.77	1.37
27	2.65	1.46	2.26	1.37	1.98	1.17	1.93	1.27
28	3.85	.81	3.98	,78	3.90	.93	4.30	.92
29	4.06	.96	4.09	.89	4.15	.84	4.46	.80
30	4.20	.83	4.00	.91	4.05	.85	4.53	.79
31	3.69	1.05	3.45	.97	3.65	1.02	4.34	1.1
32	3.80	.89	4.02	.71	3.84	.85	4.23	.88
33	2.52	1.39	3.36	1.44	3.00	1.29	3.80	1.15
34	3.69	.98	3.68	1.08	3.66	1.02	4.10	1.06
35	2.69	1.20	2.86	1.10	2.92	1.17	4.27	1.03
36	3.78	1.06	3.84	.94	3.68	1.03	4.63	2.09
37	3.76	.91	3.81	.83	3.76	.71	2.95	1.33
38	4.12	.98	4.34	.65	4.13	.69	4.43	.79
39	4.06	1.06	4.14	.86	4.09	1.13	4.57	.71
40	2.04	1.32	2.34	1.37	1.99	1.24	3.17	1.28

*Note - Augusta College, n=52; Duke University, n=44; University of Georgia, n=243, working; non-working, n=30.
Response Pattern - 1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Sometime, 4=Frequently, 5=Always.
S.D. = standard deviation

TABLE III - The Distribution of Questions 20-40 Among Four Factors for Questionnaires A and B

	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3		Factor 4	
	Q A	QB	QA	QB	QA	QB	QA	QB
Questions	20	20	21	21	26	26	24	24
	22	22	23		33		40	40
	25	25	27	27	35	35		
	28	28		33				
	29	29						
	30	30						
	31	31						
	32	32						
	34	34						
	36	36						
	37	37						
	38	38						
	39	39						
		23						

Note - For typing purposes Q= questionnaire.

TABLE IV-- The Division of Questions 20-40 into Four Principal Components

Question	
	Factor 1 Career and Personal Counseling
20	Self confidence allows you to perform well
21	Your work makes you feel important
25	Your job allows you to develop as a person
28	Your job enables you to express your individuality
29	There is a demand for your particular abilities in your job
30	Your job provides you with a sense of achievement
31	You are content with your role in the world of work
32	Your job enables you to make independent decisions
34	Your work enables you to express your individual creativity
36	You find your job varied and fulfilling
37	You are better able to handle everyday problems
38	Your field of work is interesting
39	You are suited for your position
	Factor 2 Professional Counseling
21	Your work fills a void
23	Your work provides opportunities to satisfy emotional needs
27	Your job replaces decreased home responsibilities
	Factor 3 Characteristics of Job
26	You have opportunities for advancement
33	Your time schedule at work is flexible
35	Your salary is commensurate to your abilities
	Factor 4 Home Responsibility
24	Your family is happy with your job
40	A part-time position would be more desireable

TABLE IV-- The Chronbach's Alpha Test for Question Homogeneity

Subgroup	Chronbach's Alpha	Chronbach's Alpha for 100 items
Factor 1	.92	.99
Factor 2	.51	.97
Factor 3	.58	.98
Factor 4	.23	.94

In Table IV the cumulative score for each subgroup was correlated with the score for the other subgroups. These correlations were low to moderate indicating further that each subgroup was measuring something unique though somewhat related to what the other subgroups were measuring.

TABLE V --Correlation of Factors with other Factors

Group	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 2	.44		
Factor 3	.44	.11	
Factor 4	-.44	-.23	-.25

TABLE VI -- Chi-square Test for Significant Differences in Responses to Questions 20-40 by College.

Question Number	A.C. vs D.U.*			A.C. vs UGA*			D.U. vs UGA			UGA	
	n	x^2	Sig.	n	x^2	Sig.	n	x^2	Sig.	Work	
20	96	1.2	.56	295	0.2	.92	287	1.9	.38	271	28.4
21	94	1.0	.91	294	2.1	.71	284	3.1	.55	272	27.4
22	95	0.2	.97	295	2.8	.59	285	3.0	.55	273	27.7
23	95	3.2	.53	294	2.1	.72	285	1.6	.80	272	20.3
24	89	0.1	.99	286	3.0	.56	277	3.2	.52	265	16.0
25	96	2.2	.70	295	3.6	.46	287	0.6	.96	273	15.5
26	93	4.6	.33	293	7.4	.12	284	6.1	.19	272	10.2
27	88	5.3	.26	277	13.6	.00	267	8.0	.09	256	2.5
28	96	0.7	.87	295	2.1	.71	287	1.3	.86	273	10.7
29	95	0.6	.89	293	3.9	.41	286	1.0	.91	272	8.4
30	95	1.2	.76	294	3.3	.51	287	2.6	.63	273	15.1
31	95	1.1	.19	294	2.5	.63	287	3.5	.47	272	22.2
32	95	2.7	.62	291	1.1	.89	284	2.9	.57	270	9.6
33	94	8.3	.08	290	9.4	.05	284	6.5	.17	270	11.5
34	95	5.0	.29	291	2.5	.64	284	2.4	.67	269	10.1
35	95	5.0	.29	290	5.7	.22	283	6.1	.19	269	57.9
36	95	6.4	.17	291	1.7	.79	284	5.2	.27	270	35.8
37	93	1.0	.91	283	6.2	.19	274	6.7	.15	253	64.6
38	95	6.5	.17	291	4.0	.41	284	3.3	.50	270	4.8
39	95	2.9	.57	289	5.9	.21	282	0.4	.98	268	14.2
40	89	10.6	.03	280	2.0	.74	273	11.4	.02	262	36.5

* Note - Abbreviations used for typing purposes - A.C.-Augusta College; D.U.-Duke University; UGA-University of Georgia, SIG-significance
Underlining signifies significance at .05 level or below.

TABLE VII -- Demographic and Work Experience Variables: Interrelationships and Effect of Job Satisfaction as Measured by Factors 1-4.

Question Number	Correlates significantly with Question Number	Factor Number
1	2,3,4,5,13,(-16),17,19	2
2	3,4,5, (-8),13,(-15),(-16),17	2
3	4,5,(-10),(-12),(-16),17,18,19	4
4	5,(-1[illegible]),13,(-16),17,19	3
5	13,(-16),(-18)	4
6	17	1
13	1,2,4,5,(-14),(-15),(-16),17,19	1 and 3
16	(-1),(-2),(-3),(-4),(-5),(-19)	
17	1,2,3,4,6,9	
18	3,(-5),(-8)	
19	1,3,4,	4

Questions are:

1. Age
2. Marital Status
3. Number of Children
4. Age of Children
5. Income
6. Education Level
13. Number of years at job
16. Previous job held
17. How many years at job
18. Continue work after marriage
19. How many years worked after marriage

(-) correlates negatively with.

Factors are:

1 Personal and Career Counseling
2 Professional Counseling
3 Characteristics of Position
4 Family Responsibility